

PATENT APPLICATION

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of

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Appln. No.: Not Yet Assigned

Confirmation No.: Not Yet Assigned

Group Art Unit: Not Yet Assigned

Filed: December 06, 2001

Examiner: Not Yet Assigned

For: POWDERS-AFFIXED NONWOVEN FABRIC, PROCESS FOR MANUFACTURING SAME,
AND SHEET MATERIAL CONTAINING SAME

*pu amdt
3/a
5-30-02*

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Sir:

Prior to examination, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Page 3, please delete the second full paragraph and replace it with the following new paragraph:

A1
In accordance with the present invention, there is provided a powders-affixed nonwoven fabric prepared from a fiber web comprising fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4 μ m or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less in a dispersed state in the powders-containing fiber web, the powders-containing fiber web being formed by a method other than a wet-laid method.

Page 4, please delete the first full paragraph and replace it with the following new paragraph:

*Sub B1
A2*
Accordingly, the present invention also relates to a process for manufacturing a powders-affixed nonwoven fabric comprising the steps of:
ejecting aggregates of fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4 μ m or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less, or a group of the aggregates, and/or mechanically dividable fiber capable of generating fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4 μ m or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less, or aggregates of the mechanically dividable fibers, together with powder materials, from a nozzle into a gas by an action of a

A2
~~compressed gas, to thereby divide the aggregates of the fine short fibers or the group thereof into the fine short fibers, and/or divide the mechanically dividable fibers or the aggregates thereof into the fine short fibers, and disperse the resulting fine short fibers and the powder materials; collecting the dispersed fine short fibers and the powder materials to form a powders-containing fiber web; and affixing the powder materials, while forming a nonwoven fabric from the powders-containing fiber web to obtain the powders-affixed nonwoven fabric.~~

Please delete the paragraph bridging pages 4 and 5 and replace it with the following new paragraph:

A3
In accordance with the present invention, there is also provided a sheet material comprising at least one layer of a powders-affixed nonwoven fabric prepared from a fiber web comprising powder materials and fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4 μm or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less in a dispersed state in the fiber web, the powders-containing fiber web being formed by a method other than a wet-laid method.

Page 5, please delete the second full paragraph and replace it with the following new paragraph:

A4
In accordance with the present invention, there is also provided a process for manufacturing a sheet material comprising the steps of:
Ejecting aggregates of fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4 μm or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less, or a group of the aggregates, and/or mechanically dividable fibers capable of generating fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4 μm or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less, or aggregates of the mechanically dividable fibers, together with powder materials, from a nozzle into a gas by an action of a compressed gas, to thereby divide the aggregates of the fine short fibers or the group thereof into the fine short fibers, and/or divide the mechanically dividable fibers or the aggregates thereof into the fine short fibers, and disperse the resulting fine short fibers and the powder materials;
collecting the dispersed fine short fibers and the powder materials to form a powder-containing fiber web;
and affixing the powder materials, while forming a nonwoven fabric from the powders-containing fiber web, and at the same time bonding a layer free of the powder materials, to obtain the sheet material containing a powders-affixed nonwoven fabric.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please enter the following amended claims:

- A5
1. (amended) A powders-affixed nonwoven fabric prepared from a fiber web comprising powder materials and fine short fibers having a fiber diameter of 4 μm or less and a fiber length of 3 mm or less in